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REYNOLDS HISTORICAL
GENEALOGY COLLECTION

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COUNTY of ALLEGHANY 1849
Ossia
CENTREVILLE
Centreville
Cold Creek
Mixville
HUME
Granger
Grove
Burns
Bradford
FORD
CANEADEA
Caneadea
Purchase
Allen
Birdsall
HUSH
McCall's
Almond
NEW HUDSON
Belfast
Canal
Rockville
ANGELICA
West Almond
Black Creek
BELFAST
Angelica
Cadyville
FRIENDSHIP
Friendship
Amity
Alfred
CUBA
Cuba
Genesee
Rail R.
Andover
CLARKSVILLE
WIRT
Clarkesville
Richburgh
Scio
Swain
Bolivar
W. Genessee
GENESSEE
Little Genessee
BOLIVAR
East Bounds of the Holland
River
Independence

Allegany County Statistics

Allegany County was formed April 7, 1806. Angelica was the county seat 1808 to 1858; Belmont since then.

TOWN DATE FORMED	ACREAGE	1950 POPULATION
Alfred, Mar. 11, 1808	19,200	2,862
Allen, Jan. 31, 1823	22,764	347
Alma, Nov. 23, 1854	23,349	931
Almond, Mar. 16, 1821	27,374	1,331
Amity, Feb. 22, 1830	21,960	1,997
Andover, Jan. 28, 1824	23,756	1,973
Angelica, Feb. 25, 1805	22,740	1,390
Belfast, Mar. 24, 1824		1,277
Birdsall, May 4, 1829		249
Bolivar, Feb. 15, 1825	22,600	2,680
Burns, Mar. 17, 1826	15,482	1,185
Caneadea, Mar. 11, 1808		1,845
Centerville, Jan. 15, 1819		545
Clarksville, May 11, 1835		828
Cuba, Feb. 4, 1822		2,784
Friendship, Mar. 24, 1815	22,760	2,182
Genesee, April 16, 1830	22,905	1,134
Granger, April 18, 1838	20,450	455
Grove, Mar. 8, 1827	21,070	566
Hume, Feb. 20, 1822	24,274	1,660
Independence, Mar. 16, 1821	21,572	1,053
New Hudson, April 10, 1825		618
Rushford, Mar. 8, 1816		935
Scio, Jan. 31, 1823		1,511
Ward, Nov. 21, 1856		239
Wellsville, Nov. 22, 1855		8,555
West Almond, April 15, 1833	22,109	320
Willing, Nov. 19, 1851	22,150	1,089
Wirt, April 12, 1838	22,860	1,243

The Wellsville Story, N.Y.

Pioneer Days 1807-1850

By Hazel M. Shear

Our purpose: To provide teachers and pupils with some of the material required by the Elementary Syllabus, and to arouse a widespread interest in revising and updating the history of our community. Criticisms and suggestions are cordially invited.

Number 1 of a Series

Price 50 cents

Published by the Author

Rte. 1, Wellsville, N. Y.

1851824

Preface

"Wellsville's Pioneer Days" was the name selected from the many submitted by contestants as the winning title and fitting name for Wellsville's Centennial. The Centennial was celebrated June 30 to July 6, 1957. Mrs. Hiram Parker of the village of Hallsport in the Town of Willing suggested the name for which she received a $50 Government Bond. Mrs. Parker and husband are both descendants of pioneer families of this region.

Most of the stories that we have heard and read about during the Centennial were from the time of the first permanent settlers from the 1830's onward and from the time of the formation of the town and village in 1855 and 1857. Many of us have felt that there were a great many events in this vicinity from the time when Nathaniel Dike came to Elm Valley in 1795 up to a time more familiar to us.

Lewis Thornton, who wrote the History of Wellsville in the Centennial Edition of Our County in 1895, was appointed Allegany County Historian in 1940. He served until his death in 1945. At one of his meetings for Town Historians he told us that there were some errors in what he, as well as others, had written and that it was his hope some day to be able to correct them. Mr. Thornton cher-

ished the idea of compiling a new History of Allegany County that would be more nearly accurate than those written in 1879 and 1895. It is much regretted that he did not live to get his work in motion.

Town historians in Alma, Scio and Willing were asked by Mr. Thornton to be constantly on the alert for material pertaining to those few families such as Jacob Straite, Sr., and Jacob Straite, Jr., who "occupied Lots 4 and 5 at the time of the Rogers Survey in 1826," Uncle Billy Weed, Amos Lane and a man by the name of Enda.

There are many facts gleaned from old diaries, account books and letters that have never appeared in print but which throw much light upon our very early day. It is, therefore, the plan of this booklet to bring out some events that happened here from the time of Dike's Settlement through the forming of Allegany County in 1807 to 1850.

This booklet is not published at public expense nor as a commercial project. Costs will be financed from sales. A series will be issued so that a concise history of our several localities may be made available to pupils, parents and teachers in an effort to fulfill a requirement of the elementary syllabus for instruction in local history. Sold at a nominal price, these booklets will encourage pupils to assemble a collection of them and awaken a new and deeper interest in the history of their community.

HAZEL M. SHEAR

Wellsville, N. Y., Dec. 7, 1957.

The Dark Forest

Let us go back in imagination to that time before the first settler came to Wellsville. What did Wellsville look like in 1806, the year in which Allegany became a county? Our town was then a part of the old Town of Angelica. It was entirely uninhabited by white people.

First, let us think of the River. It was called Gen-nis-he-yo by the Indians, which means The Beautiful Valley. One sometimes finds it written Chenussio and occasionally translated as Pleasant Valley, but still our beloved Genesee.

The river was wider and deeper than now. The unbroken forests held back the water and the little streams flowing into the Genesee were also much larger. Unbelievable as it now seems, there are old stories of Indians using canoes on Chenunda Creek east of Stannards, on Ford's Brook west of Stannards and on Dike's Creek. All of the river flats are known to have been covered with huge pines, pines that later made the region famous. The ground is said to have been deeply carpeted with pine needles and the trees were so dense that the sunlight could

never quite get through. It was all dark and mysterious.

It was still favored by the Indians when the white men began coming in. Their trails were the first routes of entry into the valley. Indian trails on both sides of the river led to their village of Gistaquat, approximately on the site of the Crowner Airfield, according to the Guy Johnson map. Nathaniel Dike's route from Canisteo, up Purdy Creek and over the hill across the corner of the Town of Alfred and down East Valley into Andover, thence to Elm Valley, followed an Indian trail that was centuries old. The trail continued on into present Wellsville, coming down the east side of Dike's Creek but staying well upon the hill to avoid "the big swamp." It came around the point of the hill on the Lynch farm and so on up over the Foster lands and again around the hill and along the bank on the northern side of Chenunda Creek.

Below Hallsport a trail to the left led through Fulmer Valley and back over into the Dike's Creek Valley in a loop. Some Indians were occasionally seen within this loop as recently as in the lifetime of Mrs. Ina Livermore Foster (1856-1946), who died in Alfred Jan. 19, 1946, at the age of 90. She saw them occasionally when she was a very small girl. They came there primarily to go to the salt lick which was on the old Livermore farm.

Going back to the location below Hallsport we find that a trail led up the upper Chenunda Creek

and over the hill where Independence village is found. The other trail followed down what we now call the Whitesville gully, but which was known to the older generation as the lower branch of the Chenunda, or Rabbit Creek. In this gully and at the foot of it other trails came in. Also on the Cryder (sometimes spelled Kryder) there was another very famous trail which came from the Canisteo settlements through the Steuben County towns of Greenwood and West Union into Independence and so following Cryder Creek to Truax Hill, over which they came into the village of Shongo.

The old settlers said that for some reason the Indians avoided the eastern side of the river here and forded it at the swift, shallow place in Shongo and so on down past the mound, on what in 1957 is known as the Regan farm, and to Gistaquat. All the little "runs" that led westward had special trails leading to the Ohio Valley. The first one westward below Shongo led to the famous Orebed, replete with legend. It is believed by many that the Pigeon Woods, which played such a part in the early history of this region, was near the flats where Marsh Creek enters the Genesee Valley.

There was a well-known Indian lookout on Burnt Hill above Stannards, overlooking miles of heavily forested valley. There was said to have been a large flat stone here on which a map of the valley was cut. How very easy for an Indian perched at this barren vantage point to look down over the forest

and spot a curl of smoke from the campfire of a trapper or a settler! How easy for him to send his warning signals on down or up the river!

We have only mentioned the network of trails that led into Wellsville from the south and southeast. Anyone interested in the Indian history of our region could spend a lifetime searching out these trails and comparing them with our present-day network of highways.

Into this labyrinth of dark forest and deep, still water came that bold first farmer, William Foster, with his wife and young sons, Asa and Ebenezer, and the rest of the family.

William Foster, Jr.

William Foster, Jr., was the second son of William and Patience Foster who removed from Vermont to the Town of Marcellus, Onondaga County, in 1802. They acquired 600 acres of land there. Asa was born in Onondaga County in 1803, according to census records. His brother Ebenezer, the first cooper in Wellsville, also was born there. They all came with their father to Allegany County in 1816.

William, Jr., his wife Nancy, Asa and the other children settled on Lot 11 on the river near what is now Stannards.

There seems to be no exact record of the route by which the Fosters came to Lot 11. There was a crude road up the river from Knight's settlements near the present village of Scio, which followed the old

Indian trail to an undetermined point where it connected with the Pennsylvania Road. If the Fosters came by the way of Bath, the Pennsylvania Road would have been their logical route for it was the earliest road in the county. It was built under the administration of Charles Williamson of Bath in 1801 or 1802. The Lee Tavern on the Alfred Road was a convenient stopover for settlers or travelers making the journey from Bath to Ceres.

Allen Foster, eldest son of William Foster, Sr., and the brother of William Foster, Jr., is listed with the early settlers of the Town of Scio; he remained in the old part of that town. Since he settled there before 1809 we are safe in assuming that he persuaded his brother to settle there in 1816. Allen married Patience Earll, who was born Dec. 22, 1777, and died in 1855

William and Nancy had nine children, among them Asa and Ebenezer, boys of 14 and 12. Possibly the Ebenezer Foster who was a brother of William, may have come with them and helped to build the first cabin. It must have been a very exciting time for young children. Asa became noted for his skill as a hunter and trapper and was a land agent for the Willings under John Fowler of Bath. Ebenezer was a well-known and very successful cooper.

It was necessary for boys to be quick with the use of firearms in that day, for the forest was teeming with many kinds of wild animals, wolves and panthers being the most dangerous. A bounty of $5

to $15 was paid by the county and state. Records show that large sums were paid white hunters but none to the Indians. The large brown bear, the smaller black bear and wildcats were numerous. Fox depredations were so great that it was almost impossible to keep poultry at all unless it was kept in a tight enclosure in the cabin itself.

Our published records have mentioned what a big source of income the sale of pelts and hides was to the early settler and trapper. The professional hunters and trappers probably never kept accounts. Such a ledger would now make most fascinating reading. A man mentioned as a trapper in our histories is usually found to be also a buyer from smaller trappers and farmers. It was he who took out sled loads of pelts during the winter season. We know that Asa Foster of Wellsville and Joseph Bledsoe of Whitesville both took hides to Rochester and it is possible that they may have made the trip together. This was a dangerous trip in many ways. There was always the possibility of being attacked by outlaws who made a business of stealing furs. There was an almost equal chance of being held up on the way home with the money.

Animals were not the only dread of the forests. There were terrifying large snakes, copperheads being the most dangerous because of the large numbers. The rattler was here but not so common and usually on higher ground. Clouds of insects and mosquitoes that were of enormous size hovered

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over the swamps. At night the air was eerie with the screaming of wildcats, many kinds of owls and the whip-poor-will. Memories of Indian atrocities were fresh in the minds of parents. Who could tell if these were the cries of animals or the shrieking of some savage? Some signal to other savages?

Indians were seen lurking around, too. They were keeping watch, and it was uncomfortable to be watched in this manner. The treaties had all been signed and the Indians were supposed to have withdrawn to their reservations but many remained in the spots they had known and loved. Some were seen as late as the 1850's but there is no single story of their having molested any settler in the entire county.

The Fosters built their small cabin to shut out the wilderness. Then began the difficult task of clearing up a bit of land. The usual procedure was to cut down the trees, let them fall together into a large pile and then burn them. The only way to dispose of the stump was to burn it. Old diaries show that one of the "chores" given especially to the young boys was that of "chopping fallow." Axes and mattocks were used and the tangled and matted roots were chopped and hacked until they could be raked out and burned. Corn was often planted around the stumps. It was thought to be a "soil breaker."

As soon as a spot was cleared for a homesite it was possible to begin clearing the land on the hill-

sides. Most settlers preferred the hill farms because it was so much easier to clear hardwoods than the pines in the valleys. Then, too, they were anxious to get on the higher elevations to get away from the fever and ague and the much-dreaded Genesee fever. On our hillsides were maples, ash, beech, birch, hickory, oak and butternut. All of them made their contribution, as they were cleared away, in the form of black salts. The first real money that the settlers found, except for furs, was from the sale of black salts. Black salts and the bounty on wolves! What would these people done without those two sources of income? They made many a payment on the land. Which brings us quite naturally to another important question. Who owned the land?

Land Titles

Our history books are so well filled with the details of the steps by which our titles to lands have come down to us that we do not need to spend too much time with that subject. However, Allegany County and those directly north of us have a slightly more complicated historical background since three major land companies owned the land.

The easternmost tier of towns is in the old Phelps and Gorham Purchase which was later sold to the Pulteney Estate. In looking up a deed of that tract in Belmont you will find it designated as PE (as, Liber A, p 256, 1, 7, PE), the initials, of course,

meaning the Pulteney Estate. In the same manner Wellsville, MR, means Morris Reserve. HC, again in the same way, designates ownership by the Holland Land Company in the western two tiers in Allegany County.

We were once owned by Massachusetts, then ceded back to New York after the Revolution. Phelps and Gorham purchased all of Western New York from the state of Massachusetts in 1788 and extinguished a portion of the Indian title at a council meeting with the Indians at Buffalo Creek in July, 1778. Phelps and Gorham met with financial reverses soon after that, when the scrip of Massachusetts changed in value. They had purchased the land with scrip of that state for 25 cents on a dollar. When Congress assumed the debts of the states the values increased to par and forced the company to sell. All lands on which titles were not cleared were ceded back to the State.

Robert Morris, financier of the Revolution and the wealthiest man in America, also became the country's largest speculator in lands. On May 11, 1791, Massachusetts sold all its lands in Western New York west of that still owned by Phelps and Gorham to Samuel Ogden, agent for Robert Morris. There were five separate deeds and the total price was $225,000; one-sixtieth of the land was retained by Morris for a time to satisfy the claim of John Butler. Morris later purchased the interest in this 500,000-acre tract which has always been called the

Morris Reserve. It covers two ranges of towns beginning at the State line and ranging northward to Lake Ontario. The western line of the Morris Reserve is the transit meridian, the eastern boundary of the Holland Land Company. The eastern line of the Reserve is the western line of the Phelps and Gorham or Pulteney Estate.

The sad story of how Robert Morris, who once owned Western New York, lost his wealth and was thrown into debtor's prison is well known. He sold all his lands west of the Morris Reserve to the Holland Land Company in 1792 and 1793.

The 34,560 acres of the southernmost lands of the Morris Reserve were acquired by the Willing family of Philadelphia. (It was in the Counting House of Charles Willing that Robert Morris was placed at the age of fifteen to learn banking). It is this land that became the southernmost part of the old Town of Scio, which was set off from Angelica Jan. 31, 1823, and is known as the Willing-Francis Tract. The present Towns of Willing and Wellsville lie entirely within this tract. The Town of Alma lies in the 20,000-acre Sterret Tract.

Immediately north of the Sterret Tract and the Willing-Francis is the 100,000-acre tract of John Barker Church, with the smaller Cottringer Tract between the Church lands and the Livingston County line. North of the Willing-Francis Tract lie those of Bayard & McEvers, Cazenove & LeRoy and the Harrison, all of them in the Morris Reserve. Of

these names we find that Bayard, McEvers, LeRoy, Harrison and Sterret are members of the Willing family.

The ancient records of the Holland Land Company were mostly returned to Amsterdam, Holland, where they have been occasionally used by research workers from this state. Some of them may be found at the Buffalo Historical Society. The Pulteney records are at Bath. Some of the oldest records of the Morris Reserve are recorded at Canandaigua but those from 1802 to 1806 are found at Batavia. Willing deeds are not recorded at Belmont until 1834 when the family had a settlement of its affairs. The records that were recorded at Bath were probably removed to Philadelphia and Baltimore. Canandaigua was the county seat of Ontario, from which Genesee was formed, and Batavia the county seat of Genesee and thus ours until Allegany County was set up in 1806.

John W. Fowler, an attorney at Bath, represented the Willing family's interests. Sub land agents such as Asa Foster operated under his supervision. They made the local sale and transacted any business pertaining to it. A few of the records preserved by the Foster family are invaluable.

Notes from Land Agent's Book

Bath, 16 April, 1842

Asa Foster Esq.:

Dear Sir: Your favor of the 12th rec'd today and

hasten to give you the field notes of Lot 13-14 west of the River. You can say to Mr. Munger and Mr. Greene that I have never had any power to transact business on the lots there they are on. They were alloted to John Sterling by the division made by the Court of Chancery. Clark Witter was here a few days ago and paid off for one of his lots belonging to Doctor Willing. I made out his deed and sent it to the Doctor to execute and return to me. In that letter I asked the Doctor to inform me who had charge of the Sterling lots, as some of the Settlers wished to make payment and get their contracts renewed. Mr. Witter spoke to me about Mr. Munger's lot. Was the reason my writing on the subject—I I shall hear from the Doct- in few days and will write Mr. Munger to Wellsville—you will please mention this to him.

There was a Warren Burrows called on me last winter and wished to procure the field notes of your lot, and his south of yours which I did—he seemed to think that you had in your possession some few acres that belonged to him. I observed to him you was one of the first settlers and could point out the lines to him and probably give a Satisfactory explanation- he seemed to prefer having a resurvey if I would give him the field notes which I did accordingly, and recommended to him to employ Brewster supposing him to be the best surveyor near you. If I understand him correctly, he stated your lot must run over some 15 or 20 acres & fall short some 6

acres- It is difficult in many cases to trace lines formerly run where the land has been cleared, the sight trees are gone, and stakes & corners removed. I hope the matter will be honorably adjusted between you for the sake of peace. I will be out 1 June, that is my expectation now Could come before that time but Clark Witter thinks about then there would be some money to be Collected—which is much wanted by the Willing family- so they write;

Respectfully Yours, John W. Fowler.

River Lots Tp-2 Range 1

Lot No 13; Beg. at an Ironwoode Post Mar- 13-15- thence N 89' W-55 chs to a Beach Post Mark 26- 13- Thence S. 45' w. 20 chs to a Pine Tree Mark 26- 13 Thence S 89'- 15 E. 56 Chs to a Beach Post Mark 13 Thence N. 45' E. 20 chas by the West Banke of the River & the courses thereof to the place of beginning. Containing 112 60-100 Acres.

Lot No. 14 Beg At an Iron Woode Post Mark 13-14- Thenc N. 89 (13 W. 78 Chas to a Beach Post Mark 14 - 25; Thence N. 45' E- 20 Chas to an Ironwoode Post Mark 14- 15- Thence S. 85' 15 E 56 chs to an Elm tree Mar 14- 15- Thence 245' W 20 ch by W. bank of the river & its courses thereof to the Place of Beginning Containing 141 acres.

(Township 1 is Willing, Township 2 is Wellsville. They were both in the Town of Scio at this time. These were nearly all river lots.)

David June the north half of Lot No. 125 Township 1.

Helen Fanton the south half of Lot No. 125 Township 1. The Com. to be paid next fall, Jan. 8, 1836.

Ghoram is on Lot No. 125, T 1 Charles Ghoram on Lot 125 (note at bottom of page)

Nelson Sherwood Lot 153 $20 rec'd by me

Joshua Genyan wishes Lot 127 T 1 East half to be deeded (Kenyon)

If david June dont have or secure it in a reasonable time Cornelius Henyan is to have Lot125

Joseph Hull Lot 166 Township first pr

Joshua Nobles Lot 139 Township first pr

Joseph Coats Lot 149 Township first pr.

Elijah West Lot 180 Township first S if he cant have 193 S

Albert Woodcock Lot 184 Contract to be dated 1st June 1835 Old sale, two years without interest

William Fullmer Lot 111 Contract to be dated first of June 1835 Old sale, two years without interest Township 2

James Foster of the town of Pery wishes the south part of 186 Lot 35 T 1 forty rods wide on the never more or less until 5 April next he wishes to pay $100 then I am to direct my letter to the Village of Perry Nov 3, 1835

Harvey Leach ju Wishes Lot 36 T 2 to pay Com first of Apriel next Nov 14, 1835

Job Strate wishes the south half of Lot No 38 T 2 the first payment to be paid next spring Nov 16, 1835

John udy (?) wishes the middle of twenty acres of Lot 38 first payment next spring Nov 21, 1833

Loran Slocom wishes Lot 6 the south half Nov 20, 1835

John Boyd wishes Lot 114 promise out T 2 to pay Com first of January next Nov 18, 1836

Wm. A. Jacobs has the Thomus Contract transferred to him Dec. 14, 1836

B L C Burchell wishes Lot 137 T first He will pay ten dollars this winter

W. Watson Moore wishes the north 25 acres of Lot No. 218 and the East 25 acres of Lot No 217

Amanda Sherwood wishes the Half of Lot No 188 first payment to be payed the first of May next.

Woodcock Contract altererd Lot 135 to Lancaster Henyan until the first of April next.

Edward Tompkins wishes the East half of Lot 99 T 2

Jacob Bean wishes the East half of Lot No. 174 Next January he will pay $50 with what he has left with me now which is ten dollars I am to return interest when called or no bargain made.

Nathaniel Dike

Nathaniel Dike, Allegany County's first settler, was a native of Connecticut. He was a descendant of another pioneer, Anthony Dike, who came from England in the "Anne" in 1623 and served in the Pequot War. Nathaniel, as a captain, served at Bunker Hill, was on General Warren's staff and history credits him with service on Washington's staff. Catharine Schuyler Chapter, DAR, has marked his grave in Elm Valley Cemetery.

After the Revolution, Dike followed the westward tide of migration. He remained a short time at Canajoharie in the Mohawk Valley, then removed to Tioga Point, now Athens, Pa. He became interested in the Genesee Valley and set out for what was then the Far West. A brief stay at the Canisteo settlements preceeded a trip up Purdy Creek and over the hills into Allegany County. The party comprised himself, his wife, Esther Burrill or Burrell; sons, Isaac and James; daughter, Phebe, and perhaps others. They located at what is now Elm Valley, first designated Dike's Settlement and subsequently Shoemaker's Corners.

The Dike party was followed shortly by Stephen

Cole who may have been a son-in-law. The Coles's son, Daniel, born Feb. 18, 1797, was the first white child born in the county.

There is no known reason why Nathaniel Dike came to this spot in the unbroken forest and chose to spend the remainder of his long life in that particular location. An account says that he had been held here as a prisoner of the Indians. His wife was an Indian girl whose sister, Rachel, married Samuel Adams, another early settler. Dike was not a young man when he came to Elm Valley.

Francis King, exploring the county for the Ceres Land Co. in 1798, reported a settlement of three Dike families. A packhorse route was cut through that summer from Ceres to Dike's Settlement by way of Marsh Creek and Honeoye. Almond was settled in 1796 and the next summer a road or path was cut through to Dike's Settlement, but there is no record of the road from Angelica until 1805. Pennsylvania histories tell of a blacksmith shop kept by the Dikes for those following the route from Ceres through Canisteo Valley, then known as the Dike's Settlement Road and later, Dike Road.

The enterprising Nathaniel erected a sawmill in 1803 and in 1805 had crude vats for tanning hides, thus becoming Wellsville's first operator of a tannery. The first religious services in the community were conducted in his house in 1808 by the Rev. Silas Hubbard, a Presbyterian minister.

James Dike, son of Nathaniel, born in 1776, died

Feb. 8, 1844. A captain in the War of 1812, he married Phoebe Pritchard of a prominent family in the Corning area. The first death in the settlement was that of their daughter, Zeriah, who died Jan. 21, 1798, aged 2 years and 10 months. Of eleven children, five were boys of whom James Burrell Dike was the only one to survive infancy. He was drowned in in Canisteo Creek at 16. There are many descend- through three daughters who grew up and married.

In 1802, Isaac Dike married Pamelia Gibson, the first marriage in the town. One of their children, Nathaniel, married Mary, only daughter of Timothy Ives of Coudersport and lived in Potter County.

Benjamin Brookings and John T. Hyde came to the settlement from Vermont in 1796. Hyde settled on an adjoining lot and married Phebe Dike. They took up a farm in Amity in 1803 or 1804 which was a half-mile from Belvidere, and became the first settlers in the Town of Amity. A daughter, Hannah, was the first birth in the town. Their youngest son, Thatcher Hyde, married Polly Gorton. John Hyde was a brother of the pioneer physician, Dr. Ebenezer Hyde, who acquired their farm and sold it to Nathaniel Hyde in 1824 for $900.

There are many descendants of Nathaniel Dike and his wife throughout the United States. He died at his home in Elm Valley in 1813, according to records in the Adams family. After his death, his widow went to Almond and lived with her son, James, proprietor of the well-known Dike's Inn.

She died there and was buried in the Old Merwin Cemetery in the village of Almond. Her marker still stands with the first three numerals of the date, 181.., with 4, 5 or 6 as the figure needed to complete the actual date.

The Squatters

Webster's Collegiate Dictionary defines a squatter as "one who or that which squats, as on new land or government land." The verb squat, as applying to land, is defined "to settle on land, esp. new or unoccupied land, without right or title; also to settle on public land under government regulation with a view to acquiring the title."

It is much to be regretted that the first real settlers in the village of Wellsville have been scorned and referred to as "squatters." The 1895 History says:

"There is no tradition of any previous settlement and we must conclude that Job Straite, Sr., the 'lost man' of our early history, was the village pioneer. These very early settlers were 'squatters' not particularly celebrated for virtue, sobriety or religious zeal. However, the Dikes at Shoemaker's Corners (Elm Valley), the Knights and Palmers of Scio, and other men of energy and good judgment, purchased their lands and never claimed title by virtue of possession."

Wellsville was surveyed by Jesse Rogers in 1826. His original notes show that Lot 4, consisting of of 131 acres, was "occupied by Job Straite" and was

"beech, maple and pine, first quality upland and pine flats." Lot 5, consisting of 110 acres, was occupied by Job Straite, Jr. The Straites had not been shiftless or idle for they had "made good clearings" at that time and had built cabins and lean-tos for their stock. Job Straite had a most ingenious corncracker which he had made by "cutting down a large maple and using the stump for a bowl." People who are working to get ahead in this way should never have been branded in this manner.

As far as "religious zeal" is concerned we know very little about that, but Job Straite and his wife were among the first thirteen members of the first Methodist group.

Andrew Jackson was President of the United States from 1828 to 1836. We need to know what happened nationally to understand what happened in Allegany County at the same time. During these years the country experienced a rapid growth and a period of expansion. Money was advanced to the states by the government and internal improvements ran wild. Turnpikes and canals were built all over the East and Middle West. There was an almost unbelievable degree of speculation in lands and business. It was like blowing up a balloon to the bursting point.

When Martin Van Buren became President in 1836, the country had entered a time of great inflation and poor people were faced with starvation. The year 1837 was the year of the great panic. Alle-

gany County suffered with the rest of the country. Work was suspended on the Genesee Valley Canal and the Erie Railroad, both of which meant so much to our people. The suspension of work on the canal was partly due to a change of administration in state government. Business did not pick up again until 1848 or '49.

Records in the Book of Deeds in Belmont show that in the year 1847 many persons lost their lands because they could not pay their taxes. They had not recovered from the panic. Two of the men who bought a great deal of land in Allegany County from the Comptroller of the State of New York at this time were Ira and Charles Davenport of Bath, Steuben County. One of the pieces of land acquired by Ira Davenport was Lot 4 in the Town of Wellsville which had been owned by Job Straite. Davenport sold the "undivided half of 84 acres of Lot 4" to Edward J. Farnum of Wellsville, Feb. 14, 1858. This deed is made "subject to all claims others may have to any part of said 84 acres, one-half of my interest is what is intended to be conveyed."

The land agent's book shows that in 1834 Job Straite, Jr., was prosperous enough to apply for an additional lot of land. Mrs. Job Straite, Jr., is said to have lived in the original Straite cabin for many years. It was located on the lot that the Farnums later deeded to the village for a cemetery. The 1855 census of the Town of Willing shows that Job Straite, age 70, was born in Rhode Island and was

living in a log house in that town. His wife, Patty, age 55, was born in Vermont. Job Straite, Sr., was born in Rhode Island in 1743. He is the lost man whose story in given on page 336 of "Allegany and Its People." It is one of most interesting stories of the village. He became lost in the forest at the age of 90. On a night in April, 1830, the men from Wellsville and the surrounding towns turned out and spent two days in finding the old man. There was great rejoicing when he was found. He survived the ordeal of spending three days and nights wandering in the woods. He is believed to have been a Revolutionary War soldier.

Our "Line of Descent"

Tryon County erected from Albany, 1772.

Montgomery County, the same territory, 1784-89.

Ontario County set off from Montgomery, 1789.

Steuben set off from Ontario, 1796.

One tier of towns set off from Ontario to Allegany in 1808.

Genesee erected from Ontario, 1802.

Allegany erected from Genesee, 1806.

The five original townships of Allegany County were Nunda, Ossian, Caneadea, Angelica and Alfred. The northwestern part of Nunda was set off to Wyoming County in 1846 and Portage and Nunda were set off to Livingston County in 1856. The town of Burns was formed from Ossian and the northeastern corner set off to Livingston County.

Three ranges of townships on the western side were set off to Cattaraugus County in 1808. The Town of Scio was formed from the southern half of the large Town of Angelica Jan. 31, 1823. The Town of Willing was formed from Scio and from Independence, which is in the Pulteny Estate and in the area that was once part of Steuben County. Wellsville was formed from Scio, Willing and Andover Mar. 4, 1856. The meeting took place at the tavern of Harmon Van Buren. This was located on the same lot where the Fassett House now stands but slightly farther back.

John M. Wilson was the surveyor for the Willings. He surveyed the Willing and Francis Tract in 1823 as soon as Scio, which was entirely in the Church Tract, was set off. Jesse Rogers worked with him. Rogers made a survey in Wellsville in 1826, the original of which was in 1895 in the possession of R. H. Lee, another surveyor. This map is considered the earliest source of authentic information about the settlement of Wellsville. The notes were sworn to Nov. 22, 1826, before Alvan Burt, who was commissioner of Allegany County. Someone at a later date added the names of some of the settlers who came after 1826. It is interesting to note that there are descendants of most of the original 100 families living in Wellsville today.

The Willings had a settlement of their family affairs in 1834 and after that time sold their lands as rapidly as possible. Their agent in Bath was John

Fowler. He recommended the surveyor, Sheldon Brewster, to his land agents in the area. We find that Sheldon Brewster was the man who made the first survey of the Village of Wellsville in 1837. He plotted the settlement into village lots and located fifteen streets.

Somewhat later a man by the name of Ferrin (probably Samuel Ferrin) and Henry N. Lewis adjusted the lot lines in Wellsville and Willing in the 1860's after nearly all the land had been taken up.

The First Mills

A millsite in the village was sold to Silas Hills by Gardner Wells and wife, Lucy, Nov. 15, 1833, for the sum of $15. It is found in Liber K, p 616 of Allegany County Deeds and it contains a map made by Jesse Rogers June 12, 1833. The deed says: "Beginning by the south west corner of Reuben C. Kent's village lot, 234, south to Lot 1 on Genesee River, north to mouth of Dyke's Creek, so as to embrace or take in all the water privilege containing one acre and nearly 3-4 that is to say equal undivided half of said Lot, piece or parcel of land, so or otherwise bounded and no more. . . ." This deed is signed in the presence of Sheldon Brewster by Gardner and Lucy Wells. It is apparent that Wells and Kent had this mill in operation.

It is not known just how much of a success this gristmill was for Wayne Spicer, who also came to Wellsville in 1832. He is said to have been one of

those who made the long three-day trip to Dansville to mill. About four and one-half bushels of grain was all that a horse could carry. The men tried to get back into Wellsville before dark of the third day, for horses were sometimes attacked by animals in the big swamp. However, a gristmill was in operation in Andover in 1817, owned by Luther Strong. It would seem as though the trip to Dansville must have been for some special kind of grinding.

Milton Loring, now in his 80's, who has made a most thorough study of our early times, does not believe that any of these small mills were adequate to meet the needs of the people. He states that he has heard old men tell about making the long trip to Dansville, going in groups for their protection, and camping out nights. It took several days to make the round trip.

It is quite possible that they took their black salts and any other surplus products on these trips to be shipped to Baltimore.

On Aug. 31, 1836, John Moore and William G. Angel of the Town of Angelica purchased the mill property from Silas and Emmeline Hills for $475, "being the same premises conveyed by Gardner Wells and wife Lucy by deed Nov. 15, 1833 . . . one equal undivided half of Grist mill and privileges belonging to it . . . etc."

A further deed, dated Oct. 13, 1844, shows that Gardner Wells did not sell his entire interest in the

millsite until that date, when he sold "all that equal undivided 1-4 part of Grist mill situate on Genesee River near the mouth of Dyke's Creek, on Lot No. etc...." to Silas Hills for $100. It was signed by Gardner and Lucy. Hills operated the mill until 1837. Ephriam Smith came in that year and Hills sold out to him.

It does not seem quite probable that the little settlement at Wellsville, on the south side of the village as we know it today, was without the service of a mill until that of Reuben Kent and Gardner Wells was sold to Silas Hills. But since we know that Wells and Kent were both in the village by 1828 we can naturally assume that they had a mill going, for it was a prime necessity in that early day.

Directly east of the village was the settlement called Adams Corners where there were several families by the name of Adams and also those of Taggart, Palmer and Witter. There was a mill in or near this place and one at the extreme southern edge of the town, operated before 1844 by Milton Chapman, a native of Elmira.

The Brimmer mill was located some time in the early 1840's or possibly two or three years before 1840 on Brimmer Brook which was quite naturally named for the Brimmers. This mill would be about opposite the present (1957) State Police Barracks at West Wellsville. This became exclusively a lumber mill although it was established as a gristmill. Israel Harrington, born in Otsego County in 1800,

was head of the house in which Julius Brimmer, born in 1820, lived with his wife, Catherine. Catherine was probably a daughter of the Harringtons. Israel worked in the Brimmer mill or he may have had a small one of his own.

The type of stone used for millstones was not found here so it was necessary to bring them in by ox team. This made it a difficult and expensive undertaking to start a gristmill. Mr. Loring remembers seeing the millstones "sharpened" when he was a small boy. He says that the stones were of granite and that all of them in this area were operated by waterpower. Most of the old stones used locally are seeing a new kind of service as ornaments in gardens and for doorsteps.

Sawmills and Shingle Mills

The settler's first cabin was a very crude affair, made of the trees that were cut down from the spot where the cabin was built. They were "squared up" on three sides with an ax and "chinked up" inside and out. The first roof was made only of branches thatched together to keep out the storm. The fireplace which served for both heat and cooking was made of field stones collected in the vicinity. In Allegany County there were plenty at hand. The floor was the good earth and it soon packed down hard and could be kept clean with a broom made of pine boughs.

As soon as a sawmill could get into operation the

quality of the cabins was much improved. When word got around that there was a sawmill in some locality, it at once drew many settlers to the scene. It was the policy of the land companies to locate sawyers and to advance money to them so that mills could be built.

The history of nearly every town begins with the name of the first settler and the first man to set up a sawmill. The man came to a location he had heard about, bringing the makings of the mill with him. There seems to have been no such help as this given by the Holland Land Company to the mills on its side of the county in our territory. When settlers began pouring into the village from 1829 onward, Reuben Kent, Gardner Wells and Silas Hills had to expand their mills to fit the growing needs of the community.

Some idea of how much it cost to build a house at that time may be shown by some old store records.

Silas Hills's Account Book

Silas Hills came to Wellsville in 1832 with a horse and wagon. This wagon was the only one in the village for a long time and was rented out for 25 cents a day. In the wagon Hills brought some goods that "were exposed for sale in the Van Buren tavern." The account book that Hills kept from the beginning is the earliest record of Wellsville. One of the most interesting things to us is the prices paid for work at the sawmill. Charges were $1.50 per thou-

sand for sawing pine and $2 for cherry. These two lumbers were the only ones mentioned in the book. Clear, soft pine was sold for $3 a thousand at the mill. The same quality lumber was worth $50 thousand when the 1895 history of the county was written. Shubel Spicer was charged $1.50 a thousand for sawing 7,931 feet of boards; 270 feet of lumber for Norman Perry's store was $1.20.

The first item in the book is dated May 12, 1832, and is for 1-2 lb. tobacco .15. Other items were 1 qr. tea Y.H., .31, Cr. by potatoes, 11-2 bu. .38 and is made out to Thomas Straight, Dr. May 14 Anthony Seeley is credited for 2 pounds of butter at 20c a pound. Stephen Palmer is credited on May 16 By mill irons for $5; 681-2 pounds of "flower" to Gardner Wells was $2.06; 331-4 pounds of "flower" to Harmon Van Buren for $1. Tea sold for over $1 a pound, a cotton handkerchief was 25 cents. Stephen Palmer purchased one paper of pins for .13. Chester Bristoll paid 6 cents for 1 pair "nitten needles." A pair of shoes was $1.75, a spelling book .19, a hat $4.

Barter was in fashion and credit was allowed customers on many items. Seeley paid for work on the mill in cash 25 cents and in whiskey 56 cents. Josiah Hackett received credit for 22 cents on one deerskin and on Nov. 9 .38. Asa Foster was given credit for 38 pounds of venison at 3 cents a pound, $1.44. George W. Littlefield Cr. 3 fowls, .38. Hulda Hall, first schoolteacher, paid $1.14 for 4 yards of calico.

The Carpenters

The first frame house was built in the fall of 1833 by Gardner Wells. Silas Hills, by profession a carpenter, worked on the house. He charged Harmon Van Buren $6 for making doors and casings on Oct. 28, 1833. Stephen Taylor built the second frame house in 1835 and Hills did most of the work. This house was back of the Empire Gas and Fuel Company's office and was later known as the "England House." It was the only "tenement house" in Wellsville, and it was said that most of the newcomers from 1840 to 1870 lived in it temporarily.

Hills charged $1 for a day's work on the schoolhouse Oct. 6, 1835, and a few days later to George B. Jones for one day, also on the schoolhouse, $1. A dollar a day was thought to be a very high wage.

David June, who was born in Orange County, N. Y., in 1798 and who came to Wellsville in 1841 by way of Hector, Tompkins County, was, perhaps, the best of the early-day carpenters. His daughter, Harriet, married Samuel Hills, and it was she who gave so much information about the early life of the town. David had a son, David H., born in Wellsville in 1842 who is sometimes confused with him. He, too, was a carpenter.

Other well-known carpenters were Stephen Taylor, Charles Rowley, Samuel Hills, Elijah West, one of the Seeleys and one of the Knights, Stephen Palmer who was also a blacksmith, Samuel Palmer

and Wayne Spicer. The latter did more carpenter work in Wellsville than any other person. There were many others and each new reading of the census finds names of carpenters that have been missed. Every man was quite inclined to be his own carpenter and only called in the expert for the operations he could not do well. He was always on hand to assist with the work.

The Coming of Harmon Van Buren

One of the most dramatic stories in the early life of Wellsville is that of the arrival of Harmon Van Buren with his "coach-and-four." Our histories say he came with a horse and wagon. Perhaps they referred to the enclosed coach as a wagon and even perhaps, it was a wagon. But Van Buren family legend states that it was a coach which was preserved for about 75 years, when it was burned in a barn fire. It would seem that the story of the coach is likely for we have on written authority the exclamation of "Uncle Bart" Coats (Bartholomew Coats) one of several who saw the Van Burens arrive.

He said: "Come with a coach and leave with a wheelbarrow!"

There is further reference in both histories of the county to "coming in style." However, history proves that Van Buren had come to help build the town and immediately began the construction of a log house large enough to be used as an inn. This was the year 1830. Van Buren purchased the corner,

1851824

now the Fassett House Corner, from Gardner Wells for $30.

From the family came the story of the fancy waistcoat worn by Harmon Van Buren, with the large gold watch and a heavy gold chain. He wore a "frock coat" and a stovepipe hat, yellow breeches and high-topped patent leather boots. His wife was equally resplendent; it is safe to say that the ladies had not seen anyone so stylish in a long time, perhaps never. They brought with them their children, Wil-liam, Livingston, Matthew ane Jane.

On the box of the coach with them were their two servants, John Snider and George Adams, both of whom were born in Vermont. It was only natural that the Van Buren family should have considerable style for it had come from wealthy families that had long been prominent in history of the State. Harmon was an own cousin of Martin Van Buren and the family has kept up its acquaintance with the Van Buren family of the Hudson Valley to the present day. A great-great-grandson, Richard, son of John and Ida Butterfield Van Buren, now lives near the original mansion in Kinderhook. It was distinctly a feather in the cap of the small town to have an outsider, with his chance at accurate information about the prospects of the settlements of Western New York, select Wellsville for his location. His "house" was located on the Pennsylvania Road with its constant and increasing travel. He showed wisdom by building the first tavern.

The description of the old tavern as given in the 1895 History of our County is interesting. It was directly in back of what is now the Fassett House, a modern hotel of the Emory chain. Comparisons between them are now inevitable.

The Van Buren House

"The tavern was constructed from trees, trimmed and cut into logs. These were rolled up and notched together at the corners. Openings were left for front and rear doors and windows. Poles were laid across the top of the walls to support the chamber floor, a ridge-pole and rafters were put up and the roof was made of broad bark strips, held in place by poles fastened at the ends with slender strips of green bark. An opening left in the chamber floor for a rude ladder afforded communication with the loft. A door was constructed and, for a time, old newspapers, saturated with grease, served for window glass. The openings between the logs were 'chinked' with wood held in place with a mortar of mud.

"The house furnishings were economical and simple. For chairs blocks were sawed from a log. For bedsteads, poles were fastened in the logs at one end of the loft about eight inches from the floor. The other ends were supported by blocks. The fireplace was a huge one, made below of stone and above of sticks plastered with mud.

"When this small house, 25 by 20 feet in size, was crowded with guests, the ladies of the family slept

on the ground floor in front of the fire. They could see through the chimney the tops of the tall pines outlined against the sky and moving to and fro in the breeze A 'leanto' was attached to the house and used as a barroom, a courthouse, a town hall and general loafing place. Attorneys pleaded causes there before promiscuous audiences seated on blocks, stools and whiskey barrels."

It was in this tavern, on a rainy night in April, 1832, that a group of early settlers agreed on the name of Wellsville for their town. They named it in honor of Gardner Wells, one of the earliest to come and owner of the greatest amount of land. Wells was the only one of the men who remained home that night. Besides being the largest landowner, Gardner Wells was the first person to build a cabin in the village of Wellsville and the first to build a framed house there.

Gardner Wells

Gardner Wells was born in the Town of Nelson, Madison County, in 1800. He was a son of Gardner Wells, one of three brothers, Gardner, Joshua and Robert, who settled at Nelson in 1796. They located in the southern part of the town, east of the hamlet of Erieville. They were natives of Rhode Island, where Gardner and Joshua had married before coming to Madison County.

Gardner Wells was a blacksmith, probably the first in that town, and he trained his son, Gardner,

in the blacksmithing trade. He made rude plows and "much of the printed mill machinery." His familiarity with the making of mill machinery was no doubt one of the reasons why Gardner Wells of Wellsville, with his knowledge as a blacksmith, was interested in starting a mill in the new settlement. His father died in 1839 in Nelson.

The well-known story of how the village got its name is given in the 1895 History of the County. Those present who gave it its name on that rainy spring night in 1832 were Silas Hills, Samuel Hills, Robert Wells, Reuben Kent, Daniel Tuttle, Asa Foster, Harmon Van Buren, Anthony and Cornelius Seeley and possibly others. Gardner Wells chose to remain home that night and while he was sitting by his fireside his friends and neighbors named the town Wellsville in his honor.

Allegany County records in Belmont prove conclusively that Gardner Wells made a nice profit on his purchase of Lot 3 in Town 2. It has been thought that he "sold the lot for a song, moved away and died poor." Such, however, was far from the case. The two deeds showing his purchase from the Willings of "the whole of Lot 3" reveal that he paid $448. The deed was granted Feb. 12, 1835. He began breaking up the great lot into village lots that same year. Sales were of various-size lots ranging from one-fourth acre upwards, and if they were totaled would show a nice profit for Wells above the purchase price.

The exact date Wells left the town is uncertain. A man by the name of Gibbs was living in the house "where Gardner Wells had lived" in 1841. Wells acquired a large farm near the village of Belfast for which he received the deed in 1868. The deed states that he had lived on the farm for some time. He had a son, Gardner Wells, who also was a blacksmith and lived in the Town of Friendship. He was twice married and had children who survived him. Friendship people are familiar with this latter branch of the family. Gardner and Lucy are buried in the Friendship Cemetery. Gardner died Dec. 10, 1868, aged 68 years; Lucy died Oct. 11, 1868, aged 64.

The Schools

Two years before the arrival of Asa Foster in 1811, the first school had been taught "at the extreme eastern edge of the town" by a young man named Ithamer Brookings. If we consider that the Dikes had lived at Elm Valley for 19 years, the little village known as Dike's Settlement or Shoemaker's Corners must have had quite a number of children. There were families of Dike, Cole, Shoemaker, Eddy, Adams, Brink and Brookings.

Most of these families, as that of Nathaniel Dike, were just over the Andover town line but that first school was taught in the Town of Wellsville, perhaps in home of its first teacher, Ithamer Brookings. It has been said that the settlement at Elm Valley had little influence on the village of Wells-

ville, and it is true that it did not at a later date. However, we know that the children of Asa Foster and of others, who were here before Miss Huldah Hall taught school in the village in 1832, were educated. Where was this education obtained if there was no school until 1832, when these children were grown up and married?

With the Pennsylvania Road adequate for the times, we cannot help but wonder about the children of the southern part of the township. Did they go to the Elm Valley school? Or was there some good teacher among the settlers living on the Pennsylvania Road south of the village?

The log schoolhouse on the corner of State and Main, in the location of what was for many years the McEwan shop and office that became the Lincoln-Mercury salesroom in 1957, is said to have been the first schoolhouse in the village. It was built in one day at a "raising bee," and there are stories that an excellent supply of whisky hastened the job.

Although this building, if it may be called one, existed for only about five years, it was the scene of an event not generally known. Since it was the only schoolhouse in the town, it must have been the place of meeting for Seventh Day Baptists before the organization of their church in the home of Jesse Rowley in 1834. Records of that church show that there were occasional meetings at a schoolhouse before the establishment of regular services.

The Rev. Azel N. Fillmore, a circuit preacher of the Methodist Church, organized the first Methodist society in 1830 with thirteen members. Histories have mentioned the Methodist services in the building but not those of the Seventh Day Baptists.

About the only architectural feature remembered by the very old residents in 1896 was the "immense fireplace. There was a stonewall at the back, in which was inserted one end of a large, curved stick at each end of the fireplace, five or six feet from the floor. The other end of the sticks rested against a beam that supported the chamber floor, where another timber was placed crosswise for the front of the chimney which was built on the wall and these three timbers."

Miss Huldah Hall was the first teacher in the village and this is where she "taught the three R's"—Readin' and Ritin' and 'Rithmatic.

The mills were in operation in 1837 and a new schoolhouse was built on the corner of Broad and Mill Streets. This was a frame building destroyed by fire in 1844. A new schoolhouse of frame construction was built that year on a lot given the village for the purpose by Ephriam Smith, who came to Wellsville from Angelica in 1837. This was in use when our story ends in 1850. There were three later schools built on this lot and all of them were burned. There was a clause in Smith's deed restricting the lot to educational uses. It is the present location of the beautiful David A. Howe Public Library.

The Proctor, Hills, June, Truax, Hurd, Millard and other families settled in the 1830's at the eastern side of the town. The settlement was known very early as Proctor District from the first large owner of land, Ephriam Proctor. The schoolhouse in this district, which is now owned by the Proctor Home Demonstration Unit, was first built on the present location about 1846.

The first schoolhouse at Stannards, in the Town of Wellsville, was built about 1838. After the towns of Wellsville and Willing were formed from Scio and Independence in the 1850's, this became a joint district of the two towns.

There was a schoolhouse serving the Crowner Settlements on Brimmer Brook. This is said to have been called the Brimmer Brook School. It was built in the middle 1830's. The 1856 map of the county shows it at about the present location of the Phillips Farms where the road was laid out to cross the river there to connect with another proposed road, neither of which was ever bnilt. The first location of this school was probably close to the Brimmer mill at West Wellsville.

Another schoolhouse in the Town of Wellsville that was busy well before 1850 was the Voorheis Hill School, close to the Andover town line and receiving pupils from that town. These outlying schools were not very well covered in our recent Centennial.

A modern school child would probably have no

idea of whom we could be talking if we referred to "the schoolma-rm." It was a quite common and well-worn term up to 1900 and anyone up to the 1920's would know that we meant a school teacher.

"Schoolma-rms"

The schoolteacher seems to be most often thought of as a woman, but why this is so is rather difficult to understand. Records, at least those of the Willing-Francis Tract, show a relatively high percentage of men teachers. Sometimes a school might be taught by a woman for quite a long time. But in the "good old days," there was no compulsory education law and the years of gaining an education by working a large part of the year, prolonged the educational period until very often many of the students were young men. They tended to get rough and often boasted that they were "running the school." When this happened, the trustee began to look around for a man to teach the school, and he would soon, most literally, have "whipped things back in shape."

It was customary for the teacher to board around in the homes of the people who were sending children to school. A part of the tuition of the pupils was taken care of in this way. Individuals were assessed according to the number of days their children attended school. Pupils bought their own books. One of the ways that a teacher had of earning a little more money was to purchase school-

books and sell them to the pupils. There was usually much resentment when a textbook was changed. The teacher knew also where to get books on any subject that the older people in a family might want. Teacher's wages were from 50 cents to $2 a week in addition to board.

The slate was a treasured article and carried back and forth from school to home, carefully wrapped in a piece of homespun. Slate pencils were expensive and had to last a long time. The smaller children had to use up the odds and ends of slate pencils discarded by the older children.

It seems that most of our research in regard to schools is in the story of buildings and locations instead of the education obtained by students. One of of the rare treats is to get a group of "old-timers" together and get them to tell about their experiences in the old schools. We are still close enough to our log-cabin past to be able to get a great deal of information.

There was an old saying that "you only had to be able to prove that you knew a little more than the pupils to get a school." A young person who was considered "smart in books" might be kept watch of by the trustee and other interested persons in the community. When a pupil had finished with all the subjects taught in the district school, it was considered that he was quite eligible to undertake the job of teaching the others. By the 1850's records show that there began to be certain tests that a

teacher was supposed to pass. These were given by the local trustee who sometimes "passed" a favorite who might well have chosen some other profession.

As more and better-educated persons came into the communities they would not tolerate these conditions, for a demand of our people has always seemed to be to get the best possible for our children's education. But perhaps the very fact that that there were not many persons available to teach more advanced subjects made for a more thorough knowledge of those subjects taught. A perusal of old schoolbooks shows, for instance, in spelling alone that pupils then were expected to learn the spelling and meaning of words that even our high school pupils no longer seem to know. The learning of new technical and scientific words does not make up for the loss of basic word power.

One of the tragic stories of our old schools is that they were such hotbeds for the spread of contagious and infectious diseases. The common dipper from which everyone drank, the common hand towel which everyone used and the common cake of soap that was passed around, all did their share to spread diseases. It is difficult now to believe that there was a time so close to us in which there was no thought about danger in these simple things. And we come around to a subject about which there so has been the greatest change of all—health.

When the settlers came into the Genesee Valley they had one fear, the Genesee Fever. This term

was used also to denote the mad rush into the Genesee Valley after its settlement began. There was a different type of deadly fever than known elsewhere that was called "Genesee Fever."

Health

It seemed to belong to this valley alone. It was said to resemble a combination of typhoid fever and diphtheria. Many people died from it and in some years it was known to be more prevalant than in others. Some thought it came from "pine-infested land." This was one of the reasons why so many of the settlers avoided the low, valley lands. The desire of the settlers to keep away from it if possible and if not to exterminate it, led to the ruthless destruction of the innocent pine. (Another reason, of course, was that it was quite easy, at least by comparison, to get out stumps of the hardwoods.)

But the Genesee Fever was not the worst disease or the most feared killer. Pneumonia took a heavy toll; it caused the death of large numbers of the aged. For the young, scarlet fever, known as "canker rash," diphtheria and children's diseases such as whooping cough, measles, mumps and chicken-pox, took even whole families, as our cemetery records show so plainly. Malaria, typhoid and smallpox were deadly.

When a disease came into the neighborhood there was no thought of anything but of its going the rounds. Women went back and forth to each other's

homes to help out in illness and brought the disease to their own families. Physicians were scarce, so it was necessary for a family to take care of all its common diseases and accidents by itself. The box with the family's favorite medicines always accompanied the settlers. A doctor book was a prized possession, seldom loaned out although the owner was usually generous in allowing neighbors to come in and read it.

How many people must have died from the well-meant ministrations of amateur physicians and home diagnosis as "studied out" from a doctor book in which, probably, many of the words were beyond the understanding of the reader!

There was a widespread knowledge of the use of herbs, most of it learned from the Indians. In many localities there was an Indian medicine man or "herb doctor" who was noted for his cures and even to this day there are people who go to the Reservation at Salamanca to get salves and medicines that are still made in the manner handed down in that race for hundreds of years. Most of the settlers had great faith in "Indian medicines."

Also, most unfortunately, there was so much superstition that it was hard for the few physicians to get co-operation from the families in the care of seriously ill patients. Then, too, some of the home remedies at this time seem to have bordered on the fantastic. Advanced cases of sore throat, diphtheria and tonsilitis were supposed to be cured by wearing

a dirty sock or stocking around the neck. It was not considered safe to bathe during the winter months and bags of asfetedita were worn around the neck all winter long to protect the wearer against colds and other "winter ills."

Tuberculosis, then known as consumption, took lives in almost every family in the community. Young women seemed very often to be afflicted with this disease. We know that it was because some were not strong enough to stand the harsh life of the times. Very little was done for them and it was usually said that they had "gone into a decline." It was considered hopeless when this stage had arrived and they seldom survived.

Dysentery, directly due to unsanitary living conditions, took a fearful toll of life at all times but was especially fatal to children. Cholera morbus, chiefly present during the late summer months, was thought to be from overeating vegetables but was again due to lack of sanitation and to impure water.

Not much thought was given about disease being borne by water until after the period we are discussing. Any water that looked clear and "smelled sweet" was considered safe for use. It was also thought that water from a deep or fairly deep well must necessarily be pure. We often read of a hunter stopping to drink at the running brook. There were some who believed that water was not safe to drink and quenched their thirst with "spirituous licquors."

Wellsville was very fortunate in having a resident physician in its early day. Dr. George B. Jones established himself in the town in 1832 and thus was the first physician, according to the 1895 History of Allegany County.

Dr. Sturgess came in the 1840's and was located at the Van Buren Tavern in 1850. Dr. Purple came from Otsego County in 1850 with his wife and daughter; all three were born in that county.

The nurses of that time were, like the teachers, mostly young women who had been good at taking care of the sick at home and had become skillful in the work. The ones who were "good enough to work with the doctors" were highly thought of and their advice was eagerly sought. Midwives were seldom trained other than through experience. Many of them were so capable that they traveled many miles from their homes to assist with the birth of a baby. In most cases it was all the help available. It is a well-known fact that many women died in childbirth and many infants died at birth because of lack of proper care.

Accidents were numerous. Most of the first deaths in the towns of Allegany County were those of men killed in felling trees. Wounds and cuts of most kinds were covered with ointments, homemade liniments and "sticking plasters"—salt, gunpowder and various other things were rubbed into wounds. It is a wonder that more people did not develop gangrene and blood poisoning and die.

The worst epidemics to affect Wellsville up to 1850 were those of "canker rash" in 1842 and again about 1846. There is not a cemetery in the area that does not contain graves of children dated in August and September of 1842 Sometimes a whole row of headstones testifies to the wiping out of almost a whole family. There are several of these in the Johnston and the old part of Woodlawn in Wellsville, so our town did not escape. Asiatic cholera started in New Orleans in 1832-33 and swept over the entire country. In New York State it is said to have "spread over the entire state, desolating the population." In our local records there is no specific mention of the disease except reference in account books and diaries of the years 1832-33-34 as a "sickly time."

The first birth in the Town of Wellsville was that of Rachel Dyke in 1805. The first death, according to county histories, was Zeriah or Beriah Dyke. French's Gazeteer says the first death was that of Thomas Brink in 1807. The Dyke child died Jan. 21, 1798, at the age of two years and ten months.

The Churches

No church buildings were erected in the town until after 1850 but this does not mean that the people were without religious services. Seventh Day Baptists had come to Alfred at a very early date and their faith predominated throughout the region.

Bartholomew Coats, who came to Wellsville

from Alfred in 1826, was a member of this church. Many of the first settlers were from Madison County and were Seventh Day people who had gone to Madison County from Hopkinton, R. I., the seat of that religion. Some of their services were held in the old schoolhouse before 1834. Deacon Jesse Rowley came in 1830, and organized the Scio (later called Willing) Seventh Day Baptist Church in his home on May 16, 1834. The Deacon was a native of Tioga County, Pa. He had preached in Tioga County where he had "greatly stirred the people . . ."by the meetings that he had held there. Elders Daniel Babcock and Walter B. Gillette were members of the council, helped organize the church and preached frequently at Wellsville.

The charter members of the church were Jesse, Nathen, Charles and Mary Rowley, Amos L. Maxson, William Davis, Joseph and Elizabeth Flint, Justus Seeley, Johnathan and Achsah Fisk, Stephen Tanner, Joseph Flint, Jr., John D. Green, Sally Straite and Lydia Amadown.

In the same year a Baptist Church of Christ was organized when "an ecclestical council was held." The church was organized in the village of Wellsville but most of the members were from what is now Alma and Willing At that time all three towns were portions of the Town of Scio. Members of this church were Bartholomew Coats and wife, ——— Munger and wife, Ozias Yale and wife, Elon (or Elam) Gowdy and wife, J. C. Forsbury and

wife, ——— Reed and wife, Jeremiah Graves and Louisa Richardson. The Rev. H. H. Whipple was the first pastor, serving at $60 per annum. ——— Munger was licensed and he preached occasionally. Meetings were held in the old log schoolhouse "directly across the street from the Simmons Opera House block." The church disbanded at an early date and united with the Amity Baptist Church.

The Congregational Church of Wellsville was first formed under the directon of a committee from the Presbyterian Church from Angelica on July 6, 1841. It is possible that some of the people belonged to a Presbyterian Church in Swansea, N. H., from which came their leader, Nathaniel Hammond, and others. It was under the direct leadership of Hammond who gave the first preparatory lecture and acted as pastor from 1847 to Feb. 28, 1853.

This first meeting was held in the schoolhouse that stood on the corner of Mill and Broad Streets. The members were Mr. and Mrs. Norman Perry, Mr. and Mrs. Thomas G. Conklin, Mr. and Mrs. James Dunham, Mrs. Percis Y. Johnson, Mrs. Lucinda Gowdy, Mrs. Betsey Ann Lee, Mrs. Polly Shingler, Mrs. Louisa Harmon, Misses Betsey, Sally and Catharine Bellamy, Miss Mary Dunham (Mrs. Dwight Goodrich), Miss Louisa Dunham and Miss Charlotte Finn. This was reorganized into a Congregational Church in 1857 which celebrated its centennial in 1957.

The Methodist Society was organized first of all,

in 1830, with thirteen members. They were Job Straite and wife, Peleg Palmer and wife, Keziah Champlain, Luke G. Witter, ——— Cottrell, L. M. Cottrell, John D. Mills and Ellen York.

A wealthy and influential man had planned to settle in Wellsville in 1851. He was very pleased with everything except the fact that no church edifice had been built. He felt that this denoted a lack of enterprise on the part of the people in the length of time that the town had been settled. Had he looked more closely he would have found that three churches—Methodist, Seventh Day Baptists and Congregationalist (or Presbyterian)—were holding regular meetings. Even it its noisiest days, it was never a pagan town.

Black Salts

William Peacock, a local agent in Chautauqua County for the Holland Co., is credited with being the first to experiment with receiving black salts as payments from the settlers on their contracts. He had black salts pearled and sent them to Montreal. He first sent two tons there, from which he received $5.65. Sale of black salts soon became general and it is said that black salts and the bounty on wolves paid for many of the farms.

The salts from the eastern side of the county were taken to Dansville. There they were put on rafts or arks and sent down the Cohocton to Canisteo, down the Canisteo River to Erwins and from there down

the Chemung to the Susquehanna and so to Baltimore. Many other products of this area found their way to that commercial center for a long time.

Something had to be done with all the trees that were cut down so it was rather fortunate that they could be turned into cash in some way. The trees were cut down, cut up into lengths that could be handled, piled in heaps and burned. The ashes were carefully gathered and "leached," and the lye obtained was boiled down to proper consistency and taken to market.

It had to be further refined into pot and pearl ashes by burning in special ovens. It was all hard work and at some stages could not be left unattended. The monetary reward seems very small, but for a time it was a much-needed source of revenue.

It took about 700 bushels of ashes to make one ton of potash. In 1827 a ton of potash was worth $90. There was a station for receiving black salts at Greenwood, Steuben County, that was conducted by Levi Davis. There was at least one ashery in the Village of Wellsville, but we have not been able to learn its location.

Wolves

The forests were teeming with wild animals but of all of them the wolves were the most dangerous. Panthers followed as a close second, and there was a bounty on both of these animals. Some of the most blood-curdling tales of our pioneer days are

the stories of adventures with wolves. When hungry they would go in packs and attack anything. There is one instance in the county, probably in the Town of Wirt, in which a man and his team of horses were killed and eaten by a pack. There is also a story well authenticated in two Angelica families of a time during the War of 1812, when most of the men were away from that village, of how two brave women shot wolves from their cabin windows when a pack of them came into town.

The State paid a bounty on wolves before the county was set up and bounties were paid from Batavia when we were a part of Ontario County. There was a time when the State had to pass a law that only the tails of the animals would be accepted as proof of kill for bounty purposes. It seems that either ears or tails were accepted and it became the custom of some hunters to turn in both ears and tail and so collect a double bounty.

The settlers made a determined effort to destroy them completely and by 1845 they were seldom seen in the county. That year the Board of Supervisors reported paying $30 for two wolves killed and the State paid $10. This is the last mention of a bounty paid for wolves in the Proceedings of the Board of Supervisors. At that time it was reported that 1,255 wolves and panthers killed had been "certified to" and bounties paid. The County and state had paid $19,496 in a period of 27 years for which the records had been kept.

Lumbering

The first real bid for the interest of settlers to this area was, to those with money, the thought of great riches to be obtained from lumbering; for the working classes, the chance to work and obtain land for farms. Most of the people who came here had been farmers, although a few were craftsmen and artisans. Such people as the Taggarts, Fosters, Johnsons, Straights and Weeds came in armed with "articles" for their lands, obtained from the offices of the Willings that were being maintained at Bath, N. Y. In nearly every case these articles became deeds when the Willing family had a settlement among themselves in 1834.

The fact that a few people had taken up lands between the State line and Amity, and between the Foster holding and Elm Valley (Shoemaker's Corners) on the Pennsylvania road, was evidence enough to speculators that this country would soon be developed. The professional lumberman with money in his pockets had an idea of making a double profit. He would first clear off the land and make a profit on the lumber. Then he would sell the land to the settlers for more than he had originally paid for it. Nathaniel Johnston, for instance, who bought whole townships for from 50 cents to $1.50 an acre, sold these same lands later at from $25 to $50 an acre. It has been said that he averaged to clear $40 an acre for the land.

The settlers were eager to buy such land for the difficult job of clearing it had been partly done for them, although very little could be realized in a cleaning up job from sale of black salts. But the land could be put into production much faster.

The lumberman had another advantage. There were large numbers of men who were professional workers in the lumber business and they followed whatever job was being done by the owners. It was a dangerous calling and many men were killed in the woods, but it offered excitement and the highest wages possible to get in those days. An expert sawyer was considered one of the most highly skilled men and was paid very high wages.

Expert lumbermen were often lost to the mill owners by their decision to remain in the country. Many of them who had brought their families with them found a piece of land that they liked, purchased it and remained to become farmers. The 1850 census of the Town of Scio, which then included Wellsville, Willing and Alma, is full of heads of houses who are listed as lumbermen. But we know that they remained in those localities to become permanent citizens of one or the other of the three towns.

Many of these log homes were so full of "borders" that one wonders where they all found room. It was quite customary for the wife of the lumberman to board as many workers as possible, thus augmenting the family income. They were usually

the better class of workers since "roustabouts" were generally housed in a camp. Often they were members of the families of the lumberman. Many such a woman earned the money in this way to outfit a comfortable home when she could persuade her husband to stay in one place.

Many a young man in the families of the men who had come primarily to establish farms, became enamored of the life of the forest and left home to follow the camps until he, too, might settle down —usually far from his home county.

The era from 1850 to 1860 is usually spoken of as the "age of the businessman in Wellsville," but those of us who have studied the times more closely feel that the foundation for that era were laid from 1816 to 1850. This foundation came from the trees that men found here. A lady now in her mid-sixties recently remarked as we were driving through a little Pennsylvania town, fragrant with smoke from a small tannery and chemical plant, that the smell of burning wood brought back nostalgic memories of Wellsville of a "few" years ago. When she was a little girl the acrid smell of wood smoke from the tanneries permeated the air for miles around the town—up to about 1905.

Settlers began coming in at a rapid rate after 1830—1826 had seen the arrival of Bartholomew Coats. They had to cut down trees for every cabin that was built and there was the constant ring of axes, the pungent smell of burning pine over all. It

was next to impossible to grub out the roots of the pines. It was the practice to burn them down into the ground as far as possible. It was a long time before cellars were dug, the first being only root cellars.

Nathaniel and Henry Johnston, brothers, were said to have been natives of Afton, Chenango County, N. Y. The 1855 census of the Town of Scio says that Nathaniel was born in Montgomery County, N. Y., in 1782 and his wife, Sally, was born in Connecticut in 1797. With them was James Betts, uncle, born in Connecticut in 1775. They came into the town soon after their purchase of much of the land south and west of the town. From that time on lumbering operations took precedence over everything else and all business revolved around them. A lumbering crew would move into an area much in the manner of a modern road crew attacking a thruway job. Everything bowed before clearing operations.

It was necessary to build more taverns, more blacksmith shops, more stores. Settlers wrote back home for other members of their families and for friends to come on West to the Genesee! Everything was growing and prospering and the forests were inexhaustible. The oil business in 1933 kept the Wellsville area from feeling the worst effects of the great depression. In much the same way, a century earlier the lumbering business softened the effects of the panic of those years to a certain extent.

William Duke came to the Town of Scio in 1838. He located on Knight's Creek and built a sawmill.

His interests ranged southward into Pennsylvania. Duke's Center in McKean County, Pa., was named after his family. Duke and Edward Farnham established a mill at the foot of Mill Street in Wellsville. This was a bit of opportunism for at the time the settlers farther up the valley were getting rid of pine timber by floating it down the river. The Duke-Farnham mill rescued these logs and cut them up into usable lumber. Edward Farnham was born in Massachusetts in 1809 and he became one of the town's most prominent businessmen. He was an expert "shingle shaver" and had worked in several local mills and taught others the rather difficult trade. Among the known places where he had worked was the Santee Mill at Shongo.

The pine lumber was not as well thought of as other woods. Most of it was used locally, at first, in the construction of buildings and furniture. Away from the river were stands of such timber as maple, oak, beech, ash, butternut, hickory, chestnut and cherry. It made wealth for the few but it also opened up the county and brought development and prosperity to all.

Lumber was piled high in the streets of Wellsville throughout the summer, waiting for sleighing to take it to Dansville. It was nothing unusual for as many as one hundred teams a day to be on the road to Dansville when sleighing came.

Silas Hills "exposed the first goods for sale" in a room in the Van Buren Tavern soon after his arrival

in 1826. He is thus, in a sense, the first merchant. He kept records which show that after 1835 he no longer sold merchandise of any kind.

The First Store

In that year Norman Perry built the first store in Wellsville village. Not much is known about him except that he built and kept a good store. He had the building built for him and ran it at least until 1841. Daniel Tuttle, who seems to have been something in the nature of a contractor and general promoter, had the building constructed. Silas Hills and Stephen Taylor did the actual building,

It would be interesting to us to know what was sold in that store. Flour was one of the most important staples and cost $16 a barrel in 1838. Tea, a luxury, came from the Orient in tin canisters that stood on the grocer's shelf to be ladled out, a few precious ounces at a time. The cannisters are now among the most-prized items of antique-lovers. There were no fancy cans, bottles or packages to take home "Blackstrap" molasses came up from the Deep South in hogsheads, the householder brought his own container and bought in gallons. Everyone, male and female, used snuff. It came to the grocer in small packages, later in little, round boxes, all packed in a brown earthen "snuff jar." These jars were given away to favorite customers when emptied and became pickle and preserve jars.

Space was allowed in every store for the articles

taken in as payment for store items. Ebenezer Foster's sugar tubs and churns were found in the stores. The storekeeper took in hides, furs, maple sugar and other products of the farm. Butter was a lively medium of exchange. It was brought to the store where it was packed tightly in firkins by the grocer —everybody's butter with all its variations in one tub together.

William E. Armstrong, a native of Dutchess County, N. Y., was listed as a grocer in the Town of Scio; he lived in Wellsville and had been ten years resident. His valuation was $1,000. He was born in 1827; his wife, Elizabeth, was born in Cortland County in 1831.

McLean's Tavern

Daniel McLean (or McLane) came to Wellsville in the 1830's. He had heard about the increasing business in Wellsville from lumbering. He built a tavern south of Van Buren's about in the present (1957) location of the Sinclair Station. He is said to have had sheds for teams. McLean was a native of Livingston County, born in 1805. His wife, Eleanor, was born in Pennsylvania in 1808. Their three daughters were born in Monroe County.

The McLeans left Wellsville and moved to Shongo in the Town of Willing in the 1850's. The second town meeting of that town was held in their tavern in 1853.

The 1895 History of Allegany County describes

the Fourth of July Dance held in the Tavern at Wellsville in 1849. Although one might get the impression that it was a rustic event, the names of people in attendonce proves it to have been a Wellsville affair. It is well worth re-reading:

"The dance in 1849, at McClane's tavern, situated on Main Street directly across State Street from the present McEwen site, was an affair typical of the lumber country. Rustic swains with their sweethearts walked or rode in from the surrounding country. Sam and Ed. Wilkins, the best fiddlers in all Allegany, played their way into the hearts of the dancers. Sam's quaint calling of the 'French Four' and 'Monie Musk' was an entertainment in itself. At 4 o'clock in the afternoon the dance began, and some of those present never missed a step till 10:30 the next forenoon. An elaborate spread, a regular dinner, was served at midnight, after which those of the ladies who were 'in style' made a new toilet with a change of gown and came on the floor sweeter and prettier than ever. Mr. and Mrs. Henry Johnson, Mr. and Mrs. J. B. Clark, Mr. and Mrs. E. A. Smith, Mr. and Mrs. Richard Burchell, Mr. Ephriam Proctor and Miss Mary Ann Jones, now Mrs. Tallman, were of the party."

Samuel Shingler

Samuel Shingler also was drawn to Wellsville by the promise of good times in a growing community. He was from New Jersey. His wife was Mary

Sayre, the daughter of Nathan and Abigail Haxton Sayre.

They built a tavern on the east side of Main Street on the corner of Main and State, in about the location of the garage known as the Ford Garage until 1957. This tavern had a large room for dancing, and the parties given here were largely attended. Their building was of frame construction. They catered to a high-class patronage, but they had not long to enjoy their success, for Samuel died in 1840.

Mrs. Mary Sayre Shingler was a member of the first Presbyterian (or Congregational) Church at its organization.

Nathan Sayre

The very old section of Woodlawn Cemetery in Wellsville, which was first known as the Farnum Cemetery, contains the grave of a distinguished soldier of the Revolutionary War. The marker says:

NATHAN SAYRE

died June 16, 1841

ae 92 years, 11 months

formerly of Elizabeth, New Jersey

Weep not for me, my friends,
For why, my peace is won
This is the will of God
And let thy will be done.

Beside his marker are those of John P. Shingler,

died June 15, 1835, aged 2 years, 11 months; Mary T. Shingler, died June 7, 1848, aged 43 years, and Samuel Shingler, died Dec. 31, 1840, ae 39 yrs. 16 das.

Nathan Sayre came to Wellsville with the Shinglers. His Revolutionary War record is given on page 233 of volume 82 in the D.A.R. lineage books. There we find Nathan died June 16, 1841, at Scio, aged 94.

He was born in Elizabethtown, N. J., June 30, 1748, the son of Joseph (4) Daniel (3) Joseph (2) Thomas (1). The family settled at Lynn, Mass., in 1638; removed to Northampton, L. I., in 1640 and were among the founders of that town. Thomas built a house in 1648 that stood until 1911, when it was torn down for the construction of the Parrish Memorial Art Museum. At the time it was razed it was the oldest house in New York State built by the English.

Nathan lived at Warwick, Orange County, N. Y., when the Revolution broke out. His name appeared on the assessment roll there in September, 1775. He served in the war periods as sergeant and lieutenant under Captains Wisner, Edsall, Thomas, Moffat, William Crane, Obediah Meeker and Colonels Isaac Nicoll and Hathorne of New Jersey and New York troops. On Aug. 28, 1832, he applied for a pension from Hector, N. Y., and applied again, Feb. 3, 1834, from Seneca County. Both applications were granted. After the war, he lived twelve years in Elizabethtown and later twenty years at Hector, then in

Tompkins County, before coming to Wellsville (Scio) with his daughter and her husband.

Cows on Main Street

In 1940, some people who had a large farm also owned a house and lot in Wellsville, decided to keep a cow in their small barn. They had children and wanted their own plentiful milk supply. They had also about a dozen hens. People so objected to hearing the cow bawl and the hens cackle that the owners took their livestock back to the farm.

What a contrast that presents with the first fifty years (at least) of village life! One sign of affluence was ownership of a cow. Nearly every home had one and nearly everyone kept a pig or two. There are still chicken coops to be seen in back of many of the old houses in Wellsville but except on the edges of town even poultry keeping is no longer common practice.

At first the cows were allowed to roam and be called home at night. Pigs ranged the streets, too, as did chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys and guinea hens. The last were kept to scare away hawks and crows. Their din added to the general noise of the town. There were mills along river, the blacksmith shops, the shouting of teamsters, the noise of horses, mules and oxen.

When the Elwell family came to Wellsville in 1848, they were astonished to find so many animals roaming the streets, and it was about this time that

there began to be a desire to clean up and beautify the town. Dooryards were "prettified" but for some time the animals were fenced out of dooryards and gardens rather than confined.

Every family kept its goodly supply of staple foods. Meats were preserved by drying and salting. Pork was not put down in brine until about the time of the Civil War. Salt was one of the expensive items and one that was used in bartering with the Indians. After they could no longer roam at will in the settled country, salt was one of the items the Indians desired most to obtain from the settlers. Joseph Crowner knew when they were going to camp on his "flats" and always had salt ready for them. In return, they left him a good supply of venison.

Hens were not taken care of as they are now. They were allowed to forage most of the year and "pick their livings." They took care of themselves fairly well. They were fed small amounts of grain and table scraps during winter months, barely enough to keep them alive. Most of the poultry would be eaten during the fall and early winter to save the expense and trouble of wintering then over. Therefore, eggs were precious and were preserved in salt and in sawdust. Sawdust was the cheap and easily available medium but eggs preserved in it did not keep their flavor well. Too valuable to eat during the winter, eggs were kept for the ill and for cooking and baking.

Flour for baking was obtained, chiefly, at local mills from wheat raised by nearby farmers. We know that some of the people who lived in the village were "partial" to some particular farmer's wheat. The millowner was paid by taking his share, usually half of the flour. It was much cheaper than "store-bought" flour. Some corn was raised and ground locally, but most of that important item of diet was brought in by ox teams and on horseback.

Root crops were preserved by putting them in pits and this method was followed on farms until comparatively recent date. Squashes and pumpkins had been common food for the Indians, and they grew to sizes now rarely seen. Old cookbooks show ways of preserving pumpkins in maple syrup in candied form. Most preservation of food was by drying. The Indians had apples and a small, hardy pear; a few trees of this variety still exist. Apples were dried in pans at the sides of the fireplace then strung. One of the favorite occupations of the very old and the very young young was stringing the dried apples. These were hung around the room in a dry place, taken down as desired, soaked in water over night and "stewed."

Apples served another well-known purpose also. They were made into cider which was kept for winter use as hard cider. It was used by everyone and, of course, as it progressd beyond the drinking stage it became vinegar. Vinegar could be exchanged for other staples at the village store.

Cabbage was an early staple and could be stored in the pit. It was also made into sauerkraut in large quantities. Beans were always an important part of the diet and one of the articles that came into the grocery store or could be purchased when the men went to mill. Some beans were grown by the householder. They were of the pole variety, and a favorite way was to plant them around stumps where luxuriant growth of the vines helped to "rot out" the stump. The "posy bean," with its scarlet flowers and edible product, was about the first flower to adorn the cabin.

We would like to know who began the campaign to keep the cows in the backyard but we do know that it happened before 1850. The story of the long step from milking one's own cow to having it set bottled on our doorstep each morning does not belong in this era but it is something to think about. After the cows were kept at home, it became the custom to lead them daily out to pasture at the edge of town, and a number of small farmers made a part of their living this way. Also, it was one of the chores of the boy in the home.

A Matter of Diet

What did the people eat 100 to 150 years ago? The story from the Asa Foster family is that they lived on venison and other game from the forest and fish from the streams. In the spring there were many greens that were recognized and used. There were

wild onions and leeks. It was thought that if one only ate enough leeks (along with plenty of sulphur and molasses) all "winter ails" would vanish.

Each settler brought seeds with him and it was the work of women and children to see that a few vegetables were raised. From this period, no doubt, came the loathing for turnips and "rutabagies" expressed by a generation of people who are now nearly all gone. They felt almost a contempt for anyone who could eat these vegetables. Old diaries in particular tell of raising them around stumps and close to the cabins. They could be kept for a long time and in protected locations could be left in the ground very late in the fall.

"Injun meal" (corn meal) was used generously and was one of the leading staples. It was boiled and eaten as mush that was often fried in meat drippings and served with maple sugar. It was made into a variety of cakes, the most famous, of course, "johnnycake," as it was called in this locality. It was the basis of the steamed pudding that cooked for hours above the big kettle in the fireplace, rich in dried fruits and, in season, wild cherries and plums, and many berries.

Griddle cakes, known as flapjacks, were served daily. A large fireplace griddle was shown during the Centennial. The cakes were accompanied by huge slices of pork or large cakes of homemade sausage. The most common drink was sometimes called coffee but seldom was coffee. A drink was

made by putting a variety of grains together, roasting them and grinding. Tea was very expensive and usually kept for company. Butter and cheese were made at home. The cheese was a rather crude product, according to some, but others feel that it was one of the better things of that day. Butter could be kept for long periods by covering it with salt and wrapping in old linen and "laying down in salt.' The cheese was much like our cottage cheese would be if firmly packed, salted and allowed to cure.

Some of the recipes of the day that called for a dozen eggs and a pound of butter would bankrupt the modern housewife.

Maple Sugar

One of the commodities that a settler could always sell or exchange was maple sugar. It was also one of the earliest products made. Most of the people had come from the New England States where sugar making had become an art. It was the only sugar in general use, the costly refined white sugar being saved for state occasions. It took a lot of maple sugar to buy a wanted article. The classic example of this is that Uncle Billy Weed gave Miami York 200 pounds of maple sugar for a shotgun in the spring of 1827.

This was the going price, for Carleton Cline of the Hallsport area is known to have paid the same amount.

One of the first calls for the work of a cooper was

for sugar buckets, as the wooden buckets were long used for this purpose. (The first cooper was Ebenezer Foster, brother of Asa, who prospered greatly at this trade). The sugar buckets were mostly made of basswood but some pine was used. The "olden sugar-makers" whittled out sugar troughs, as they were called, to run the sap from the tree to the wooden buckets. The troughs were made from two feet to two and a half feet long and were made mostly of basswood or pine as these woods were easy to handle and could be easily cleaned. In some old sapbushes it is still possible to see piles of stones near the larger trees on which the buckets stood.

Most of the sugar was made into large loaves. Regular large-size bread tins were the favorite mould. It was some time before moulds were purchased to be used for that purpose alone. The sugar was graded for home use. Some of the best was saved for home use if it could be spared. There was a second grade, the sugar that did not harden properly and was called soft sugar. Some of it would stay in cakes for a while but was likely to dissolve so that it was better to keep it in sugar tubs—again made by the local cooper. Some of these old sugar tubs are prized antiques in modern homes. This sugar was that in general use in the home. Then there was the least desirable quality, that made late in the season after it had become buddy and also any that had been scorched in the boiling process.

It took special skill and special recipes to come

up with a light cake when using maple sugar. One of the foods most appreciated by housewives as prosperity and transportation improvements made it available to them was white sugar.

Erie Railroad

The Erie railroad was not completed through Wellsville until 1852. The route was surveyed and planned to go through in the 1830's. This was one of the reasons that Wellsville was attractive to settlers. The heart of the lumbering region with the Erie running through it was a bright prospect

The work was begun in 1830. A man by the name Horace Riddle had supervision of the work. He brought in a camp which he established at the corner of Loder and Genesee Street. This marked the beginning of Irish and Italian laborers in this section. When hard times and the business panic caused cessation of the work on the railroad, many of them remained here. Most of the Irish worked as lumberjacks or for farmers and eventually became some of the best farmers in the area. Most of the Italian people preferred business and worked in town, but fewer of them remained at this time.

The original plan for construction of the railroad was to elevate the rails well above the ground. When the work was given up the timbers that had been put in place were taken out and used for sills in several dwelling houses that were being constructed at the time.

The first cabinet maker to locate in Wellsville was Welcome Coats who came in 1836, built a house and established a shop in a room in his home. He was a native of Otsego County, born in 1812, and a brother of Bartholomew Coats who had come ten years earlier. His wife was Joanna Burrows, born in Cayuga County in 1815. Besides their children they had with them a fifteen-year-old boy, Scot Fish, who was apprenticed to Coats.

First Cabinet Shop

The first cabinet shop was the room in the Coats house. It was a frame house built where they later built the brick home that was called the "Coats Homestead." This latter building was in back of the present First Trust Company and was torn down in 1956 for the addition at the back of the bank.

The first steam engine ever used in Wellsville was put in the Coats Furniture Factory in 1852. There were many cabinet shops throughout Allegany County but this is the only one that ever became a factory of any size.

A Wellsville woman owns a chest of drawers made at the early Coats factory bearing the date Jan. 1, 1843. When she found the chest, someone had substituted ten-cent-store glass knobs for the original wooden ones. She had the chest refinished and wooden knobs made. There are many high chairs, children's rockers, dining tables and chests dating back to the 1840's.

A reference has been made to some of the remedies used by our pioneers. Here are a few examples of primitive home medication to which the ill were hopefully subjected.

Some Old Remedies

An Indian of the Cowanesque Valley praised the bark of ironwood to be made into a tea to drink as a sure cure for consumption.

To Cure Warts—Steel someone's used dishcloth, the dirtier the better. Bury it and within seven days your warts will disappear.

Sumac Bobs—Gather when ripe and bright red. Cover with water and make a tea. Gargle a glassful every morning and evening and it will cure sore throat and bad tonsils.

Roots of Canadian Thistle—Cut fine, added to wine or cider. Drink a small glassful daily to cure rheumatism.

Earache—Get someone to smoke in your ear with a well seasoned corncob pipe.

This recipe, used by the Rogers family, was found in William Rogers' scrapbook. Originally it was the account book of William M. Cornwell of West Almond, Allegany County. It is dated April 5, 1850.

INDIAN COUGH MEDICINE

1 black birch bark 2 ironwood 3 witch hazel 4 moosewood 5 spiganent (spikenard?) 6 wintergreens 7 mandrake root 8 dwarf-elder bark 9 brown sugar 10 sale molasses 11 princess pine. Boil the barks and "drean" through cloth; boil down thick then put sugar and molasses in. Bottle up. Ready for use.

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